



Eeyou Istchee Tourism
2011-2012 Annual Report

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In 2007, Eeyou Istchee Tourism was granted official status as Quebec's 22nd Regional Tourism Association. Since then, we've been actively promoting and marketing Eeyou Istchee as a uniquely appealing tourism destination. At the same time, we created a strong partnership with Tourisme Baie-James (TBJ). Right from the outset, we recognized that working with TBJ on initiatives such as the regional tourism guide and regional tourism gala would be beneficial. While EIT certainly benefited from TBJ's experience in the beginning, both parties recognize that sharing knowledge and resources is mutually advantageous in the long term. Working together has definitely made it easier to develop and promote sustainable outdoor and cultural tourism in the region.

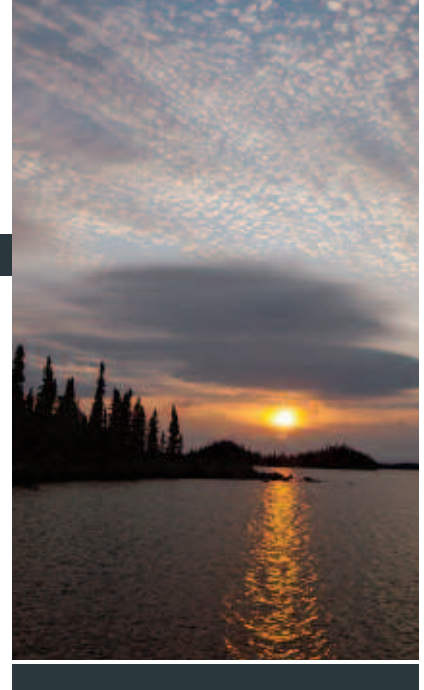
The recently completed Projet ACCORD and Action Plan is an important step in our collaborative approach. It has helped to solidify our efforts to create a strong brand image for Eeyou Istchee/Baie-James. Projet ACCORD brings together Cree and Jamesians in developing a tourism strategy that is sustainable, respectful of Cree rights, and beneficial to both regions in the long run.

Projet ACCORD includes a targeted market campaign that focuses on developing tourism products and packages that appeal to travellers from abroad. This is particularly important because international visitors represent a strong market for the kinds of cultural and outdoor tourism products available in Eeyou Istchee/Baie-James.

We're convinced that fostering a sustainable tourism industry in the region will produce many positive outcomes for the communities, for our youth, and for our culture. Regional stakeholders and the governments of Quebec and Canada recognize that tourism is a major driver for regional economic growth. But further development of the tourism industry is only desirable if it provides direct and tangible benefits to Crees and Jamesians and the region as a whole.

I'm glad to have this opportunity to serve as President of Eeyou Istchee Tourism. My involvement first began with COTA when I was elected to its Board of Directors as the representative for Waskaganish. It's an honour to follow in the footsteps of former EIT President Sherman Herodier. Sherman and I share a longstanding commitment to tourism in Eeyou Istchee and a belief that Cree participation in tourism has the potential to provide many social and economic benefits for each community and the region as a whole.

Raymond Blackned
President



ABOUT EIT

Eeyou Istchee Tourism was the 22nd Regional Tourism Association (RTA) to come into being in Québec and the 3rd to share the administrative region of Northern Québec. This new RTA is designated to represent the Cree communities of the Eeyou Istchee tourism region.

On August 15 2007, the Government of Québec granted RTA status to the Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association (COTA).

Given the considerable difference between the RTA and COTA in terms of roles and responsibilities, a decision was made to create a separate organization, namely Eeyou Istchee Tourism (EIT) to provide for proper fulfilment of the RTA's mandate.

As set out in the formal agreement between EIT and the Government of Québec, the role of the RTA is to promote tourism and regional operators, support the development of new products, make information more readily available to tourists, and cooperate with other RTAs in creating a Québec-wide tourism policy.

Objectives of Eeyou Istchee Tourism

- Position and promote Eeyou Istchee as a key destination for First Nations tourism, outdoor and adventure tourism, and outfitter services.
- Support the development of marketable tourism products and the upgrading of existing products with a view to contributing to regional economic growth and development of the tourism industry.
- Enhance regional tourism infrastructure by facilitating access to information relating to tourism products and services.

- Develop a tourism industry based on the principles of sustainable development and designed to have a positive impact on youth, elders and cultural life in the region.

Dues-paying COTA members are automatically members of EIT. Some of the additional benefits for our members include a listing in the Baie-James Eeyou Istchee Tourism Guide and eligibility to have their tourism business included on the provincial blue road panels.

EIT is responsible for the planning and delivery of projects, initiatives and events such as the Grands Prix du Tourisme gala, the development of the Regional Tourism Guide and advertising.



Raymond Blackned
President
Waskaganish



Titus Shecapio
Vice-President
Mistissini



PROJECT SUMMARIES

EIT actively promotes Cree tourism providers. Our members offer a wide range of activities including hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, canoeing, as well as cultural and interpretive tours. Our goal is to work with members to build a world-class and sustainable tourism industry in the region.

Eeyou Istchee Tourism Association Projects and Initiatives

Following are brief summaries of the projects and initiatives that were undertaken and/or launched in the 2011-2012 fiscal year.

1. Tradeshows Strategy 2012

Tradeshows continue to be an important way to promote the tourism industry in Eeyou Istchee. Attending these shows provides an invaluable opportunity to meet and talk to potential visitors and share our enthusiasm for the unique travel experience offered by Cree tourism operators. As in previous years, the current tradeshow roster is comprised of shows that promote fishing and hunting. However, as we continue our work with Cree entrepreneurs to develop market-ready cultural tourism packages, we will expand our tradeshow roster to include shows that deal specifically with this market. EIT members are invited to accompany us to the tradeshows which not only provides them with a great opportunity to promote their own tourism businesses but is a great learning opportunity. While at tradeshows our members can source suppliers and can see first-hand what other similar businesses are doing in terms of marketing and promotion.

Members are asked to cover the cost of their travel to the show, and we cover the cost of hotel accommodations and meals. Following is a list of the shows attended during the 2012 tradeshow season:

- Salon de la pourvoirie, chasse et pêche, Québec, Québec
- Salon de la pourvoirie, chasse et pêche, Montreal, Québec
- Ottawa Boat & Sportsmen's Show, Ottawa, Ontario
- Toronto Sportsmen's Show, Toronto, Ontario
- Springfield Sportsmen's Show, Springfield, Massachusetts

2. Projet ACCORD

In 2011, the Projet ACCORD strategy and Action Plan for tourism in Eeyou Istchee/Baie-James were completed and approved by the Québec government. Projet ACCORD is a province-wide initiative that fosters collaborative action on a regional basis. It involves business people and entrepreneurs who share a vision for regional development in their sectors of activity and who have defined a long-term strategy for promoting and achieving their vision. To that end, it relies on regional assets and strengths and promotes excellence in key sectors, including tourism, throughout Québec.

Projet ACCORD focuses on developing tourism products and packages that appeal to travellers from abroad and includes a targeted marketing campaign designed specifically to attract visitors from around the world.

The Projet ACCORD tourism-related strategy that was completed in November 2011 includes a detailed 5-year action plan and budget for developing a niche of excellence with respect to sustainable adventure, nature, and cultural tourism in Eeyou Istchee/Baie-James. The strategy was developed by a group of Cree and Baie-James business people and representatives of regional and local organizations involved in tourism, including EIT, COTA, and TBJ.

The next step in the process is the appointment of a Regional Coordinator, who will begin to implement the plan.

3. Tourism Symposium

Following the success of last year's Symposium, our first ever, we were pleased to have an opportunity to hold it again this year. The symposium, organized jointly by EIT TBJ and Tourism Autochtone Quebec (TAQ) was titled Human Resources, A Driving Force. The two day event took place on March 28th and 29th in Chibougoumou. This year's symposium included a presentation by Marc Ethier and Yves Laurendeau of Attitude Plus, a company that specializes in hiring



practices, training and coaching. In addition, representatives from the following organizations were present to provide participants with information on their respective programs and funding opportunities: Institut de tourisme et d'hôtellerie, Centre d'Études Collégiales de Chibougamau, Sabtuan Adult Education Services at the Cree School Board, Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Cree Human Resources Development, the Ministry of Tourism, Eeyou Economic Group, CFDC inc. and Emploi-Québec.

4. Regional Awards Gala

Each year, EIT in collaboration with TBJ has the pleasure of organizing an annual awards event as part of the province of Québec's Grands Prix du Tourisme. The Grands Prix du Tourisme québécois were created to highlight businesses that have excelled in the tourism industry and increase public awareness of the important role tourism plays in Québec's economy.

The Regional gala of Grand Prix du tourisme québécois was held on March 29th in Waswanipi. This year we were pleased that Mr. Jean-Michel

Perron, a consultant from the firm Pour l'Avenir des Régions, accepted our invitation to host this important annual event that celebrates our local tourism industry and honours the people who work so hard to make it a success. This year over 130 people attended the gala.

We are pleased to announce that representing Eeyou Istchee, our own Sherman Herodier was honoured in the tourism personality category for his years of dedication. Mary Ann Neeposh-Jolly was recognized for her commitment and perseverance while completing the "Supervision of Hospitality Services in Native Communities" course offered by Centre d'etude collegiale Chibougamau in the community of Waswanipi.



Additionally, FaunENOrd won gold for its flora and fauna observation network in Northern Quebec and Corporation de développement économique de Villebois, Val-Paradis et Beaucanton took silver for its canoe trails in the Turgeon valley. Other winners included the Festival du doré Baie-James in the Festivals and tourist events, and Escapade boréale in the adventure and ecotourism category for "Route des Vents," a paraski activity that takes place on Lake Mistissini in cooperation with the community of Mistissini and Osprey Outfitters. Pauline Tremblay of the Quad du Vrai Nord Club won the Volunteer of the Year award.

On behalf of Raymond Blackned, president of EIT, and Marie-Christine Mailhiot, President of TBJ, we would like to congratulate all the winners.

As always, the success of this year's gala would not have been possible without the support of our many sponsors and partners who share our commitment to help develop the Eeyou Istchee/Baie-James region into a tourism destination of choice. Thank you to all who helped make this evening such a tremendous success!

Escapade Boreal was selected to represent Eeyou Istchee/Baie-James at the province-wide gala held in Sherbrooke on May 28th. The winner will be announced in next years report.

5. Regional Tourism Guide

As part of our partnership agreement with ministère du Tourisme du Québec, EIT must develop an annual regional tourism guide in accordance with the guidelines and standards agreed upon by the Regional Tourism Associations and Québec's ministry of tourism. At a planning session held in Val d'Or in August 2007 and attended by the COTA/EIT Board of Directors, a decision was made to work jointly with TBJ to produce the regional tourism guide. As such, EIT in collaboration with TBJ recently completed our fourth edition of Baie-James and Eeyou Istchee Tourism Guide. The guide includes a profile and photographs of each Cree community as well as a



portrait of the region and information about Cree culture, history and traditions. The 2012-2013 edition is now available at tourism outlets throughout the province of Quebec.

Dues paying members of EIT are given a free listing in the Guide which provides a great opportunity to promote their tourism businesses to a wide range of potential customers.

6. Advertising

Advertising continues to represent an important opportunity to promote the region to potential tourists in eastern Canada and the northeastern United States. Again this year, in recognition of our partnership with TBJ, we have launched a joint advertising campaign promoting the region as a whole while highlighting popular activities such as hunting, fishing and snowmobiling as well as outdoor adventure and cultural activities offered by Cree tourism providers. We are confident that as we continue to support our members in the development

of market-ready tourism products, print ads will continue to be an increasingly important vehicle for reaching larger and more diverse target audiences. In addition, as we begin to move forward with the objectives set out in the project ACCORD, we will be looking at increasing visibility abroad by placing ads in publications with an international distribution. In 2011-2012, joint EIT and TBJ ads were placed in the following publications:

- Guide touristique
- Guide des vacances au Québec
- Guide de la Pourvoirie
- Magazine Géo-Plein Air
- Magazine Supertrax
- Magazine Motoneige Québec
- Snow Goer
- Quebec Outfitters Magazine
- Magazine Touring
- Le journal des voyages en groupe
- Aventure Chasse et Pêche
- European kite magazine
- Passeport POM

